

# Young Turks Offer Little for the Future

Dr. Stuermer, German Army Officer and Writer, Who Repudiated His Country's Activities in Asia Minor, Tells of Ruling Party's Intrigues and Price the Nation Is Paying

*The instalments of Dr. Harry Stuermer's sensational book, "Two War Years in Constantinople," already printed in THE SUN, supplied proof of Germany's complicity in the massacres of the Armenians by the Turks; described Germany's attempt to commit another crime against civilization by inciting the Mohammedans to a holy war, and gave an account of the race fanaticism of the Young Turks. The extracts printed below give striking pictures of the leaders of the Young Turks and forecast Turkey's future.*

Dr. Stuermer is a German. He served in the German army at the beginning of the war. His observations of German methods in Constantinople converted him into an opponent and a critic of the German Government. His book has attracted wide attention in Europe as that of a patriotic German whose conscience forced him to tell the truth.

By DR. HARRY STUERMER.

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WHILE fanatical adventurers and money grubbing deputies paid by the easily duped German Embassy were preaching a perfectly useless "Holy War" on the confines of the Arabian territory of the Turkish Empire, "the hangman's policy" of Djemal Pasha, the commander of the Fourth Ottoman Army, and Naval Minister, had been for a long time in full swing in the old civilized land of Syria against the best families among the Mohammedan as well as the Christian population.

Here again the Young Turkish Government assumed the existence of a widespread conspiracy and a Syrian and Arabian Separatist movement toward autonomy, which was to free these lands from Turkish rule and to be established under Anglo-French protection.

## No Doubt of Djemal's Methods.

Any one who has once watched how the committee in Stamboul made a pretext of events on the borders of Caucasia to exterminate a whole people, including women and children, even in western and central Anatolia and the capital, can no longer be in the least doubt as to the methods employed by Djemal Pasha, the "hangman" of Syrians and Arabs, how grossly he must have exaggerated and misstated the facts to find enough victims so that he could look on for a year and a half with a cigar in his mouth—as he himself boasted—while the flower of Syrian and Arabian youth, the elite of society and the aged heads of the best families in the land were either hanged or shot.

Any one who has seen this man close at hand (whom a German journalist belonging to the *Berliner Tageblatt* with the most fulsome flattery once called one of the handsomest men in Turkey) knows enough. Small, thick set, a beard and a pair of cunning cruel eyes are the most prominent features of this face from which every one must turn in disgust who remembers the "hangman's" part played by the man.

## Slyness Deceives the French.

It is extraordinary that he should still pass as pro-French in many quarters, and perhaps it is part of his slyness to preserve this role. Djemal is not pro-French; he is only the most calculating of all the leading men of Turkey.

Djemal's work is nearing fruition. His cruel executions, his cynical breaking of promises in Syria, have at any rate contributed, along with other politically more important tendencies which have been cleverly utilized by England for the establishment of an Arabian Caliphate, toward the decisive result that the Emir of Mecca has revolted against the Turks. The movement is bound to spread, and slowly and surely it will roll on till it ends in the full and perfect separation from Turkey of all Arabic speaking districts as far as northern Syria and the borders of southern Kurdistan.

It is to be ardently hoped that even this great organizer will soon be at the end of his tether in Syria and have to leave the country where he has kinged it royally for two years. Then, perhaps, the moment may come when things are going so badly for the whole of Turkey that Djemal will at last have the opportunity, in spite of the failure of his policy in Syria, of measuring his military strength against his hated enemy, Enver, in Stamboul. That would be the beginning of the last stage before the complete collapse of Turkey.

There has been no lack of cross currents against the war policy of the

Young Turkish Government. Ever since the entry of Turkey into the war, there has been a deeply rooted and unshakable conviction among all kinds and conditions of men, even in the circles of the Pashas and the Court—the people of Turkey take too little interest in politics and are composed of far too heterogeneous elements for there to be anything in the nature of what we call "public opinion"—that Turkey's alliance with the Central Powers was a complete mistake and that it can lead to no good.

The benefit for the Entente of Turkey's sympathetic neutrality would have been enormous. Neither in Germany nor in Turkey is there any doubt whatever in military circles that it was Turkey's entry into the war on the German side and her blocking of the Straits, and so preventing Russia from obtaining supplies of ammunition and other war material that has so far saved the Central Powers. Had Turkey remained neutral constant streams of ammunition would have poured into Russia, Mackensen's offensive would have had no prospect at all of success and Germany would have been beaten to all intents and purposes in 1915.

## Guided Toward Germany.

These are opinions expressed hundreds of times by thoroughly patriotic and intelligent Turks who saw how the ever more intensive propaganda work of the German Ambassadors, first Marschall von Beberstein, then Freiberr von Wangenheim, gradually wormed its way through opposition and prejudice, how the German military mission in Constantinople tried to turn the Russian hatred of Germany against Turkey instead, how, finally, those optimists and jingoists on the "Committee," who knew as little about the true position of affairs throughout the world as they did of the intentions of the Entente or the means at their disposal, proceeded to guide the ship of state more and more into German waters, without any reference to their own people in return for promises won from Germany of personal power and material advantage.

These were those days of excitement and smoldering unrest when Admiral von Souchon of the Goeben and the Breslau, with complete lack of discipline toward his superior, Djemal Pasha, arranged with the German Government to pull off a coup without Djemal's knowledge—chiefly because he was itching to possess the "Pour le Merite" order—and sailed off with the Turkish fleet to the Black Sea. [I have my information from the former American Ambassador in Constantinople, Mr. Morgenthau, who was furious at the whole affair.]

[Note.—Djemal Pasha learned the news that Admiral von Souchon had bombarded Russian ports, and so made war inevitable, one evening at the club. Pale with rage, he sprang up and said: "So be it; but if things go wrong, Souchon will be the first to be hanged."]

## Threw Cards on the Table.

These were the days when Enver and Talaat threw all their cards on the table in that fateful game of To Be or Not to Be, and brought on their country, scarcely yet recovered from the bloodshed of the Balkan War, a new and more terrible sacrifice of her manhood in a war extending over four, and later five, fronts.

The consciousness that Turkey has committed an unbounded folly has long ago been borne in upon wide circles of Turks in spite of falsified reports and a stringent censorship.

The late successor to the throne, Prince Yussuf Izzedin Effendi, was the highest of those in high authority who openly represented the pessimistic anti-war tendency. It was for this that he was murdered or perhaps made to commit suicide by Enver Pasha.

The whole truth about this tragic occurrence can only be sifted to the bottom when the dictators of the "Committee" are no longer in their place and light finally breaks on Turkey. Whether it was murder or suicide, the death of the successor to the throne is one of the most dramatic scandals of Turkish history, and Enver Pasha has his blood, as well as the blood of so many others, on his head.

In connection with this sensational event, the world has already heard how



PRINCE YUSSUF IZZEDIN

Yussuf Izzedin was kept for years under the despotie Abdul Hamid shut off from the world as a semi-prisoner in his beautiful Konak of Sindjirlikuyu, just outside the gates of Constantinople, where he became a sufferer from acute neurasthenia.

Early one morning he was found lying dead in a pool of his own blood with a severed artery. He had received his death wound in exactly the same place and exactly the same way as his father, Sultan Abdul Aziz, who fell a victim to Abdul Hamid's hatred.

So much at least seems to be clear, that Prince Izzedin, who was naturally interested in retaining his accession to the throne undisturbed and who in spite of his neurasthenia was man enough to stand up for his own rights, foresaw ruin for his kingdom by Turkey's entry into the war on the side of Germany. He was more far seeing than the careless adventurers and narrow minded fanatics of the "Committee" and recognized that the letting go of the treasured Pan Islamic traditions of old Sultan Hamid was a grave mistake which would lead to the alienation of the Arabs, and which endangered both the Ottoman Caliphate and Ottoman rule in the southern parts of the Empire.

## Fearful for Future.

Perhaps the "Committee" had something to fear for the future, when the time came for the reverses now regarded as inevitable. Yussuf would then make use of his powerful influence in many circles—notably among the discontented retired military men—to demand redress from the "Committee." Enver, true to his unscrupulous character, quite hardened to the sight of Turkish blood, and determined to stick to his post at all costs—for it was not only lucrative, but flattering to his vanity—was not the man to stick at trifles with a poor neurasthenic, who under the present military dictatorship was absolutely at his mercy. He therefore decided on cold blooded murder.

The Prince, well aware of the danger that threatened him, tried at the last moment to leave the country and flee to safety. He had even taken his ticket, and intended to start by the midday Balkan train next day to travel to Switzerland via Germany. He was forbidden to travel.

Whether, feeling himself thus driven into a corner and nothing but death at the hand of Enver's creatures staring him in the face, he killed himself in desperation, or whether, as thousands of people in Constantinople firmly believe, and as would seem to be corroborated by the generally accepted, although of course not actually verified, tale of a bloody encounter between the murderers and the Prince's body guard, with victims on both

sides, he was actually assassinated, is not yet settled, and it is really not a matter of vast importance.

One thing is clear, and that is that Izzedin Effendi did not pay with his life for any disloyal act, but merely for his personal and political opposition to Enver. He is but one on this murderer's long list of victims.

## A Suspicious "Suicide."

The numerous doctors, all well known creatures of the "Committee" or easily won over by intimidation, who set their names as witnesses to this "suicide as a result of severe neurasthenia"—a most striking and suspicious similarity to the case of Abdul Aziz—have not prevented one single thinking man in Constantinople from forming a correct opinion on the matter. The wily Turkish Government evidently chose this kind of death, just like his father's, so that they could diagnose the symptoms as those of incurable neurasthenia. The opinions of different people about Prince Yussuf's death only differ as to whether he was murdered or compelled to commit suicide. "On la suicide," was the ironical and frank comment of one clever Old Turk. We will leave it at that.

Enver has been extraordinarily overestimated in Europe. The famous Enver is neither a prominent intellectual leader nor a good organizer—in this direction he is far surpassed by Djemal Pasha—nor an important strategist. In military matters his positive qualities are personal courage, optimism, and, consequently, initiative which is never daunted by fear of consequences, also cold bloodedness and determination; but he is entirely lacking in judgment, power of discrimination, and largeness of conception.

## Most Repugnant Person.

Regarded from a purely personal point of view, Enver Pasha is, in spite of the fulsome praise showered on him by Germans inspired by that most pliant implement, German militarism, one of the most repugnant subjects ever produced by Turkey. Even from a purely external point of view his appearance does not at all correspond with the picture of him generally accepted in Germany from flattering reports and falsified photographs.

Small of stature, with quite an ordinary face, he looks rather, as one of my journalistic colleagues said, like a "gardener's boy" than a Vice-General and War Minister, and any one who ever has the opportunity I have so often had of looking really closely at him, will certainly be repelled by his look of vanity and cunning. It was really most painful to have to listen to him (he has always been a bad and monotonous speaker) in the Senate and the lower house at the conclusion of the Dardanelles campaign reading his report in a weak, halting voice, but with the disdainful tone of a dictator. Every third word was an "I."

Besides this, Enver is one of the most cold blooded liars imaginable. Time and again there has been no necessity for him to say certain things in Parliament, or to make certain promises, but apparently he found cynical enjoyment in making the people and Parliament feel their whole inferiority in his eyes. What can one think, for example, of such performances as this?

## Word on Exemption Ignored.

At the end of 1916 when the discussion about military service for those who had paid the exemption tax (bedel) was going on, he gave an unsolicited and solemn assurance before the whole house that he had no intention whatever of calling up certain classes until the bill had been finally passed and that it would show that he was really desirous of sparing commercial life as far as possible in the calling up of men. Exactly two hours after this speech the drum resounded through all the streets of Stamboul and Pera, calling up all those classes over which Enver had as yet no power of jurisdiction, and which he said he wanted to keep back because to tear them away from their employment would mean the complete disorganization of the already sadly disordered commercial life of the country.

In contrast to Talaat, who is at least intelligent enough to keep up appearances and cunning enough to hold himself well

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